

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 0 881 167 B2

(12)

NEW EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the opposition decision:
28.07.2004 Bulletin 2004/31

(51) Int Cl.7: **B65D 85/50, B65D 77/04,
A47G 7/07**

(45) Mention of the grant of the patent:
13.12.2000 Bulletin 2000/50

(21) Application number: **98109279.4**

(22) Date of filing: **22.05.1998**

(54) **Container for bunches of flowers having improved functional features**

Behälter für Blumensträuße

Réceptient pour bouquets de fleurs

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE ES FR GB GR IT LI NL PT

(30) Priority: **29.05.1997 IT MI970385 U**

(43) Date of publication of application:
02.12.1998 Bulletin 1998/49

(73) Proprietor: **Bertola, Pierangelo**
27038 Robbio (Prov. of Pavia) (IT)

(72) Inventor: **Bertola, Pierangelo**
27038 Robbio (Prov. of Pavia) (IT)

(74) Representative: **Modiano, Guido, Dr.-Ing. et al**
Modiano & Associati SpA
Via Meravigli, 16
20123 Milano (IT)

(56) References cited:
WO-A-96/37133 DE-A- 2 709 649
DE-U- 29 606 339 US-A- 4 300 312

- **SOVIET INVENTIONS ILLUSTRATED** Section PQ, Week 8811 Derwent Publications Ltd., London, GB; Class Q34, AN 88-076100 XP002077578 & SU 1 328 245 A (AS UKR THERMOPHYS) , 7 August 1987
- French design registration No 944529 published under no 0378536

EP 0 881 167 B2

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a container for bunches of flowers having improved functional features. More particularly, the present invention relates to a container for bouquets which allows to preserve the freshness of the flowers used.

[0002] It is known that so-called bouquets are generally prepared by using supports which allow to wrap the bunch of flowers and act, for all purposes, as a vase, allowing the florist to create a floral composition which does not have to be undone by the buyer to place it in an adapted vase.

[0003] This allows the florist both to prepare different floral compositions in advance and to quickly compose the bouquet, which can also be immersed in the water poured into the support.

[0004] The conventional supports described above are constituted by a thin, transparent, flexible sheet made of plastics, which is shaped like a half-circle and is provided with radial slits which form seats for the stems of the flowers the florist wishes to use to create the composition.

[0005] The florist thus places the stems of the flowers in the slits, according to the composition that he wishes to obtain, and then wraps the plastic sheet around the stems, obtaining a sort of cone from the apex of which the stems of the flowers protrude and are thus mutually fastened so that they cannot move.

[0006] The resulting conical shape has an open bottom and is therefore rested on a transparent polypropylene sheet which is wrapped around the cone of the support and is tightly tied around its apex, so as to form both the bottom of the support and an aesthetically attractive covering for the cone.

[0007] The polypropylene sheet allows to pour water into the cone, which accordingly acts, for all purposes, as a vase for the flowers contained in it.

[0008] Although the above solution has a pleasant final aesthetic appearance, it has a series of drawbacks, including above all the fact that the stems of the flowers inserted in the slits of the thin flexible semicircular sheet can perforate the subsequent sheet of polypropylene wrapped around the conical support.

[0009] This obviously entails the severe drawback that the water poured into the conical structure leaks from under the cone through the holes produced by the stems in the polypropylene sheet.

[0010] Furthermore, the insertion of the stems in the slits of the support and the subsequent wrapping thereof around said stems is an operation which requires some manual skill in addition to being time-consuming.

[0011] Another drawback of the above solution is the fact that although the diameter of the floral arrangement that the florist can obtain varies, the configuration of the support is always conical and thus does not allow to vary at will the aesthetic effect of the resulting "vase".

[0012] US-A-4 300 312 discloses a container for

bunch of flowers as defined in the preamble of claim 1.

[0013] The aim of the present invention is therefore to provide a container for bunches of flowers which can be filled with water with no risk of leakage.

[0014] Within the scope of this aim, an object of the present invention is to provide a container for bunches of flowers which allows to vary at will the final shape of said container.

[0015] Another object of the present invention is to provide a container for bunches of flowers which is capable of giving substantial stability to the bunch of flowers.

[0016] Another object of the present invention is to provide a container for bunches of flowers which can be used easily and at low costs.

[0017] Another object of the present invention is to provide a container for bunches of flowers which can be used with fresh, dried or artificial flowers.

[0018] This aim, these objects and others which will become apparent hereinafter are achieved by a container for bunches of flowers, as defined in claim 1.

[0019] Further, preferred embodiments are disclosed in dependent claims 2 to 10.

[0020] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the detailed description of an embodiment according to the invention, illustrated only by way of non-limitative example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the container according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is a sectional lateral elevation view of the container according to the present invention, shown in the active configuration, with a bunch of flowers contained therein;

Figure 3 is a plan view of the container according to the present invention;

Figure 4 is a lateral elevation view of the container according to the invention, shown in its final configuration;

Figure 5 is a partial sectional lateral elevation view of the container according to the invention, according to a first embodiment;

Figure 6 is a sectional elevation view of the container according to the invention, according to the embodiment shown in Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a sectional lateral elevation view of the container according to the invention, according to a second embodiment; and

Figure 8 is a sectional elevation view of the container according to the invention, according to the embodiment shown in Figure 7.

[0021] With reference to the above figures, the container according to the present invention, generally designated by the reference numeral 1, comprises a base element 2 which has a raised perimetric rim 3 which forms a sort of container tray meant to accommodate

stems 11 of flowers forming the bouquet

[0022] The base element is advantageously circular.

[0023] A plurality of elongated elements 4 extend from the raised rim 3 and are monolithic therewith; said elements are thin, so that they are flexible and can be curved toward the central vertical axis of the base element 2. The elongated elements are substantially perpendicular to the base element from which they extend, or can be angled slightly toward the outside of said base element so as to give the container a more rounded appearance when said elongated elements are curved toward the central axis.

[0024] Said elongated elements have a conical contoured front surface, with the apex directed upwards so that once they are curved toward the center of the base element 2 the portion of elongated element 4 is visually reduced.

[0025] Each elongated element 4 ends, at its free end, which lies opposite to the raised rim 3, with a retaining tooth 5 which is adapted to retain a raffia 6 used to tie together the free ends of the elongated elements 4.

[0026] The raffia 6 thus has the purpose of fastening the elongated elements 4 to each other and around the stems of the flowers, as explained hereinafter

[0027] The outer surface of the tip of each elongated element 4 is rough, so as to prevent any slippage of the raffia 6 beyond the retaining tooth 7 in an upward direction.

[0028] The upper ends 7 of the elongated elements 4 have rounded edges, so as to prevent said ends from perforating the polypropylene sheet 8 meant to be wrapped around the container 1.

[0029] Ribs 9 can be provided adjacent to the lower portion of the elongated elements 4, at the base element 2, so as to graduate the flexing of the elongated elements 4. Depending on the height of the ribs 9, the elongated elements 4 assume a more or less curved configuration, as shown in the figures, and particularly Figure 6, shows a possible bell-like shape assumed by the container 1 in the presence of the ribs 9, while Figure 7 is a view of the conical configuration which can be obtained without the ribs 9.

[0030] Another rib 10 arranged circumferentially along the lower surface of the base element 2 acts as stable resting element for the container 1 when it is placed on a level surface.

[0031] Advantageously, the base element and the elongated elements that are monolithic therewith are molded from transparent plastics to allow light to pass toward the stems of the flowers and to allow said stems to be visible from outside.

[0032] With reference to the above figures, the use of the container according to the invention is as follows.

[0033] First of all, the florist places the stems 11 of the flowers, resting them so that their lower ends are against the upper surface of the base element 2, intertwining them as required, and then flexes the elongated elements 4 toward each other in a central region, so as to

then gather their upper ends 7 by means of the raffia 6.

[0034] In this manner, the raffia 6 mutually fastens the free ends 7 of the elongated elements 4, with the stems 11 secured between them, but leaves a passage, albeit a minimal one, through which the water for preserving the flowers is poured.

[0035] Once this operation has been completed, the polypropylene sheet 8 is wrapped around the container 1, so as to decorate it in an aesthetically pleasing manner and at the same time to form a container in which water can be poured and contained

[0036] In practice, it has been found that the container according to the invention fully achieves the intended aim, since allows to avoid leakage of water poured into the container to preserve the flowers of the bouquet, at the same time ensuring simple use and a pleasant aesthetic effect.

[0037] The lower ends of the stems of the flowers and/or the wire optionally used to support the flowers are in fact unable to perforate the polypropylene sheet, since they rest directly against the base element, which prevents their contact with the polypropylene sheet.

[0038] In practice, the materials used, so long as they are compatible with the specific use, as well as the dimensions, may be any according to the requirements and the state of the art.

[0039] Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A container (1) for bunches of flowers, comprising a base element (2) from the perimeter whereof a plurality of elongated elements (4) extend, said elements being able to curve toward the central vertical axis of said base element and being monolithic with said base element, which accommodates the stems of flowers composing the bunch, said base element (2) being circular and the elongated elements (4) being arranged along its circumference substantially at right angles to said base element, said base element (2) being a disk which has a raised rim (3) along its entire circumference, said elongated elements (4) being monolithic with said rim (3), **characterized in that** the free ends of said elongated elements (4) are provided with a retaining tooth (5) for the passage of a raffia (6) meant to tie said elongated elements together in a curved position.
2. The container according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the free end of each one of said elongated

elements (4) tapers more than the underlying portion connected to the base element (2).

3. The container according to claim 1, **characterized in that** each free end of said plurality of elongated elements (4) has a rough outer surface to prevent any slippage of the raffia (6), in addition to said raffia retaining tooth (5). 5
4. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it comprises a plurality of ribs (9) which are monolithic with said elongated elements (4), at said base element (2), and are adapted to stiffen said elongated elements (4) and to limit and change their flexing. 10
5. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said base element (2) and said elongated elements (4) that are monolithic therewith are made of transparent material in order to allow to view said stems. 15
6. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said transparent material is plastics. 20
7. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said base element (2) has, on its lower surface, a circumferential rib (10) which is adapted to constitute a resting surface for said base element (2). 25
8. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said degree of curvature toward the central axis of said base element (2) is determined by the size of said ribs (9). 30
9. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the free ends of said elongated elements (4) have rounded edges. 35
10. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said elongated elements (4) have a conical shape, with the apex arranged at their free end. 40

Patentansprüche

1. Behälter (1) für Blumensträuße, aufweisend ein Basiselement (2), von dessen Rand aus sich eine Vielzahl länglicher Elemente (4) erstreckt, wobei die Elemente sich gegen die zentrale vertikale Achse des Basiselements krümmen können und einstückig mit dem Basiselement ausgebildet sind, welches die den Strauß bildenden Blumenstiele aufnimmt, wobei das Basiselement (2) kreisförmig ist 45

und die länglichen Elemente (4) entlang seinem Umfang im Wesentlichen rechtwinklig zu dem Basiselement angeordnet sind, wobei das Basiselement (2) eine Scheibe ist, welche einen erhöhten Rand (3) entlang ihrem gesamten Umfang aufweist, wobei die länglichen Elemente (4) einstückig mit dem Rand (3) ausgebildet sind, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die freien Enden der länglichen Elemente (4) mit einer Haltezinke (5) für den Durchgang eines Raffiabastes (6) ausgebildet sind, der dazu bestimmt ist, die länglichen Elemente in gekrümmter Stellung zusammenzubinden.

2. Behälter nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das freie Ende jedes der länglichen Elemente (4) stärker geneigt ist als der darunterliegende Abschnitt, welcher mit dem Basiselement (2) verbunden ist. 15
3. Behälter nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** jedes freie Ende der Vielzahl länglicher Elemente (4), zusätzlich zu der den Raffiabast haltenden Zinke (5), eine raue äußere Oberfläche aufweist, um jegliches Abrutschen des Raffiabastes (6) zu verhindern. 20
4. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** er an dem Basiselement (2) eine Vielzahl von Rippen (9) aufweist, welche einstückig mit den länglichen Elementen (4) sind und dafür ausgelegt sind, die länglichen Elemente (4) zu versteifen und ihre Biegung zu begrenzen und zu verändern. 25
5. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das Basiselement (2) und die länglichen Elemente (4), die mit diesem einstückig sind, aus einem transparenten Material hergestellt sind, um die Sicht auf die Stiele zu ermöglichen. 30
6. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das transparente Material Kunststoff ist. 35
7. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** das Basiselement (2) auf seiner unteren Oberfläche eine umfangsseitige Rippe (10) aufweist, die dafür ausgelegt ist, eine Auflageoberfläche für das Basiselement (2) zu bilden. 40
8. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** der Grad an Krümmung zur zentralen Achse des Basiselements (2) hin durch die Größe der Rippen (9) festgelegt wird. 45

9. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die freien Enden der länglichen Elemente (4) abgerundete Kanten aufweisen.

10. Behälter nach mindestens einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die länglichen Elemente (4) eine konische Form aufweisen, wobei die Spitze an ihrem freien Ende angeordnet ist.

Revendications

1. Récipient (1) pour bouquets de fleurs, comprenant un élément de base (2) à partir du périmètre duquel s'étendent une pluralité d'éléments allongés (4), lesdits éléments étant capables de se courber vers l'axe central vertical dudit élément de base et étant solidaires dudit élément de base, et qui reçoit les tiges des fleurs composant le bouquet, ledit élément de base (2) étant circulaire et les éléments allongés (4) étant disposés le long de sa circonférence, sensiblement à angles droits par rapport audit élément de base, ledit élément de base (2) étant un disque qui comporte un rebord surélevé (3) le long de toute sa circonférence et lesdits éléments allongés (4) étant solidaires dudit rebord (3) **caractérisé en ce que** les extrémités libres desdits éléments allongés (4) sont munies d'une dent de retenue (5) pour le passage d'un raphia (6) destiné à attacher lesdits éléments allongés ensemble dans une position courbe.

2. Récipient selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que** l'extrémité libre de chacun desdits éléments allongés (4) est plus effilée que la partie sous-jacente reliée à l'élément de base (2).

3. Récipient selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que** chaque extrémité libre de ladite pluralité d'éléments allongés (4) a une surface extérieure rugueuse pour empêcher le raphia (6) de glisser, en plus de ladite dent (5) de retenue du raphia.

4. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comprend une pluralité de nervures (9) qui sont solidaires desdits éléments allongés (4), au niveau dudit élément de base (2), et qui sont adaptées pour renforcer lesdits éléments allongés (4) et limiter et changer leur flexion.

5. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit élément de base (2) et lesdits éléments allongés (4), qui sont solidaires avec celui-ci, sont faits de matière transparente afin de permettre de voir lesdites

tiges.

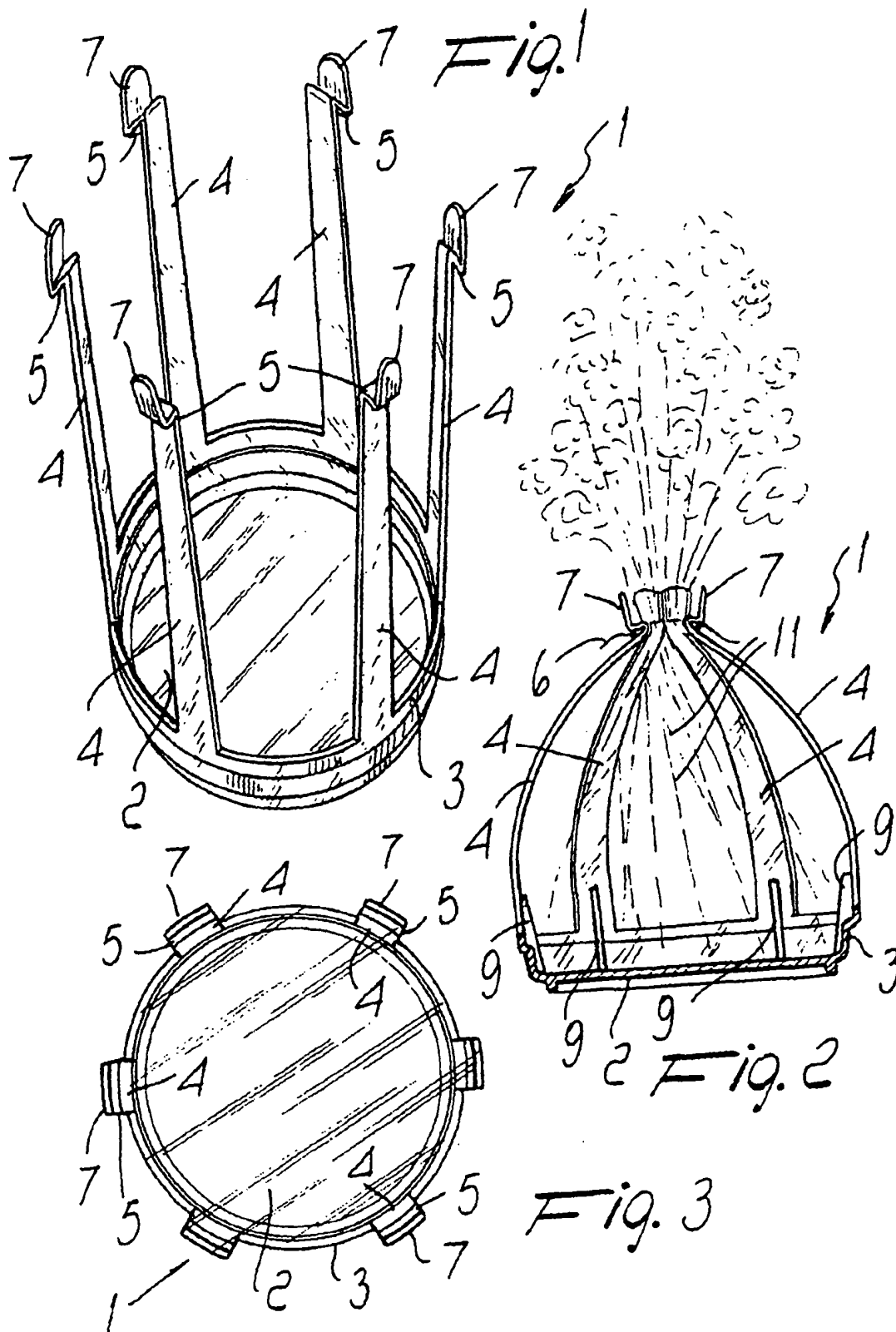
6. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** ladite matière transparente est une matière plastique.

7. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit élément de base (2) comporte, sur sa surface inférieure, une nervure circonférentielle (10) qui est adaptée pour constituer une surface d'appui pour ledit élément de base (2).

8. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit degré de courbure vers l'axe central dudit élément de base (2) est déterminé par la taille desdites nervures (9).

9. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** les extrémités libres desdits éléments allongés (4) ont des bords arrondis.

10. Récipient selon l'une ou plusieurs des précédentes revendications, **caractérisé en ce que** lesdits éléments allongés (4) ont une forme conique, l'apex étant situé au niveau de leur extrémité libre.



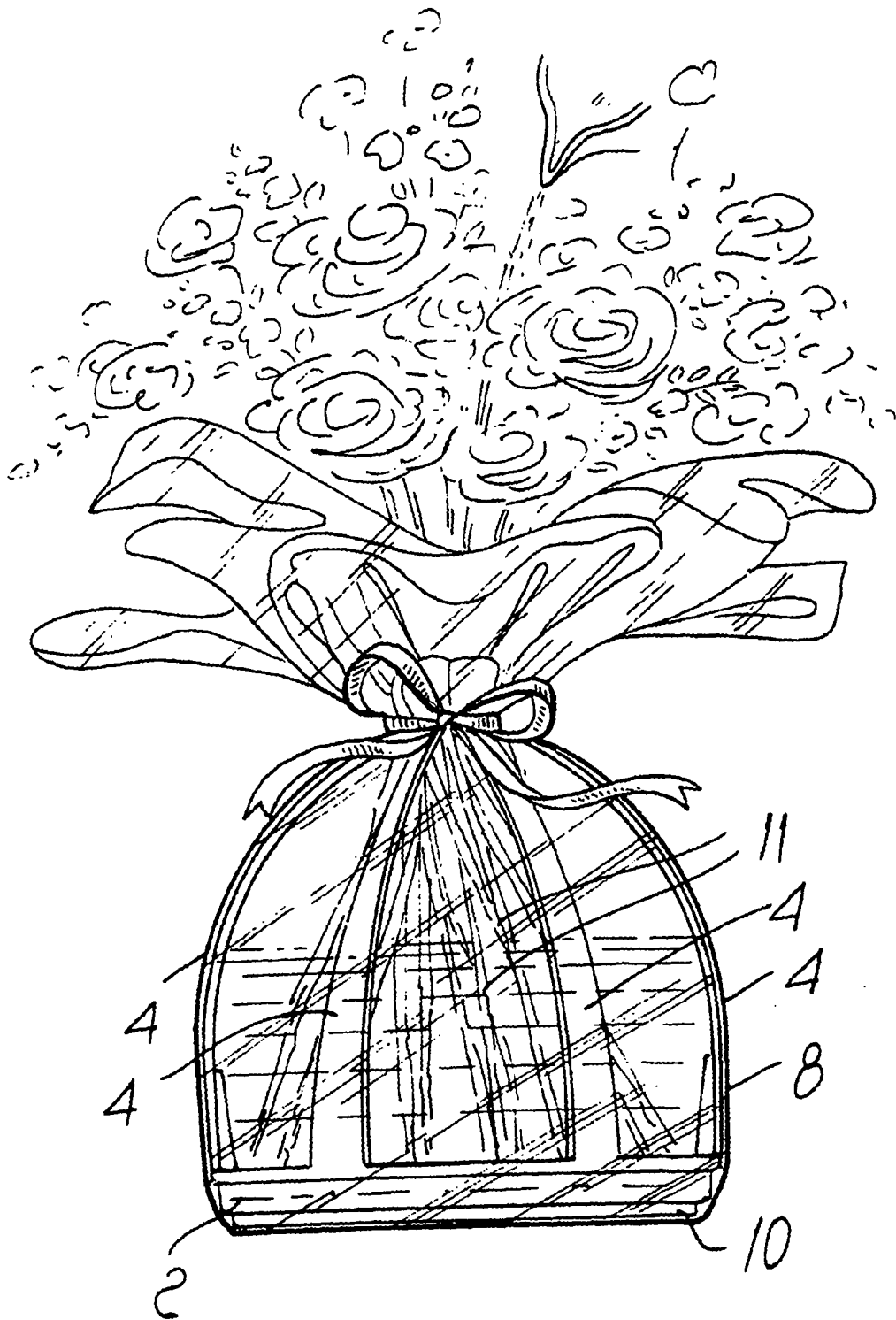


Fig. 4

